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cut prices (because they can afford it through securing quantity prices) is a highly unfair and uneconomic proceeding," implying that economic proceedings must favor the smaller unit, probably in order to preserve the competition and the individual initiative dear to the economist's heart.

Also, the author's insistence upon the advisability of having business research done by outside agencies instead of by a private staff in the business implies that scientific work cannot be done by the private staff, which is absurd when one considers the number of chemists, physicists, and engineers now attached to business. It appears too much like a sales argument, other examples of which mar the book.

On the whole the book is more for the business man than for the professional statistician who will, nevertheless, find it valuable as serving to acquaint him with the character of the problems business is studying today, about which he must sooner or later know more than he does.

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*Budgets of Families and Individuals of Kensington, Philadelphia.* By Esther Louise Little, A.M., and William Joseph Henry Cotton, A.M. A thesis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania. Lancaster, Pa. The New Era Printing Co., 1920. Pp. 273.

Since the cost-of-living investigations made by Engels, it has been customary to classify such studies as extensive or intensive, according to the number of cases included. Whether or not such a differentiation is now justifiable, this report will be classed as an intensive study, as it includes only 34 budgets of which 23 are of families, 9 are of unmarried women, and 2 are of unmarried men. The budgets are from actual records kept day by day for a year or a large part of a year, during 1913 and 1914, that is, just before the beginning of the recent upheaval in prices. The investigation also includes a study of incomes, and standard budgets are drawn up for textile-mill workers which the authors designate as a "fair standard of living," the descriptive title thus varying from other such designations as the "minimum-of-subsistence budget" or the "health-and-decency budget."

The study of only a few cases has the advantage of enabling the investigators to know them well. This knowledge the authors have achieved and the basic material is presented in considerable detail, both in summaries and in family histories. The presentation is interesting to read. The accounts are very human. The lists of expenditures for clothing by items, for instance, make a vivid impression. An excellent feature is the showing of the amount of income week by week in curves for each individual. These curves are by no means smooth and the frequent deep downward slopes from the rather low level seem to have almost terrible significance. The details of some of the miscellaneous expenditures are very welcome, as this part of the budget is frequently neglected. The general pattern of the study is somewhat like those of the well-known investigations of Chapin and of More. And it is important to have a few more carefully kept records to add to the not too large existing stock.

Although the fulness of the exposition of the original data is admirable, there are some shortcomings in certain aspects of method. The intensive study of a few cases is often praised for the accuracy attained, but it also presents abundant opportunities for making improvements in method and for obtaining information difficult to obtain when a larger number of cases are studied less thoroughly. Have the authors utilized

these opportunities? And have they made any contributions to the development of the technique of cost-of-living studies? In reference to these questions the following comments are made.

The importance of food expenditures in the budget is admittedly great. The food should be listed in quantities and a chemical analysis should be made, showing not only calories but the various constituents. This the authors have not done, although the technique for such a procedure has been well worked out and it could have been done for these few families without much effort. Instead the authors price in Philadelphia one standard dietary worked out for Fall River, Mass., and make comparison with the food expenditures of the particular families. Food is the pivotal point in determining the subsistence budget. It is of greatest value for health and for the growth of children. It is very important that adequate analysis should be made of food consummation.

The great need in studies of standards of living is not so much estimates in prices as in quantities, and qualitative descriptions. For instance, such a quantity budget is intelligible at all times, while a price budget is difficult to understand with the shifting of general and special prices that take place. The thing that tells us what the standard is is the quantity and quality of the items and not the prices, though in some cases prices give a rough indication. This point is particularly applicable to this study made in 1913-14 and published five years later after prices had changed radically. With the small number of families, the authors might have presented more of their estimates in quantities and descriptions.

It would have been feasible, also, to make a more intensive study of fuel than was done. It is desirable to know the fuel consumed expressed in the British Thermal Units in relation to temperatures, kinds of houses, and types of heating apparatus. Such information regarding the relation of fuel to such varying factors was needed, for instance, by the Fuel Administration during the war. Such information would help in determining objectively fuel needs.

In summarizing the data the authors might have made improvements, and indeed should have avoided some defects. In the first place, twenty-three families are almost too few cases to summarize; they form too small a sample to be of much statistical significance. Furthermore, the constitution of these families is so varied that it is difficult to make comparisons. For instance, a family with boarders and lodgers is not the same sort of unit as a family with only husband, wife, and children. If the selection of cases had been made on the basis of a more rigidly defined unit, the results would have been more amenable to statistical treatment. Indeed, it appears that the authors are guilty of sins of commission as well as omission in such a case as the following. Family number 22, which includes a man, boarder and lodger, spent \$338 for food which includes the cost of the food the boarder ate, and \$36.40 for clothing which does not include the cost of the boarder's clothing. This is all right. But in reckoning the total expenditures of the family, the cost of the boarder's food is added in but not the cost of his clothing. The question is: What is the size of the family whose total expenditure is \$555.20? Furthermore, the percentages of expenditure for various classes of items are computed. Thus 60.88 per cent goes for food including the boarder and 6.56 per cent goes for clothing not including the boarder. Now a per cent is a part of a whole, but what is the whole? Is it the expenditure of a family of three individuals or of four? Percentages are supposed to facilitate comparisons, and in the adjoining column of the table referred to another family spends 40.14 per cent of the total expenditure for food; but the family that spends 60.88 per cent has a boarder. What does the percentage comparison mean?

In Chapters II and IV the investigators set forth a standard budget, calling it a "fair standard." The setting of a standard is more difficult than recording what families actually spend, because it involves values and is peculiarly liable to subjective influences. It is interesting to know that the authors set \$1,069.94 as the yearly expenditure at a fair standard of living for a textile-mill worker's family of five, consisting of father, mother, a girl of 10, a boy of 6, and a boy of 4 in 1913-14 in Kensington, Philadelphia. But one wishes to know the objective basis for calling it a "fair standard" and an account of what a "fair standard" is in some terms other than the classes of items. There are any number of standards of living. They could be plotted in a series. But why is a particular one singled out and called a fair one? A listing of concrete items does not make it a "fair" one. It might be "fair" to the authors but not to the reader or to some other investigator. There should be some objective tests upon which there would be common agreement, as when we say the temperature of a room should be kept in winter at 68 degrees Fahrenheit. The reader feels a certain confidence in the authors' standard because he sees that the authors are very familiar with the life of the community. But this is not an objective basis. It is certainly too much to expect at the present stage of the evolution of budget studies to arrive at a thoroughly objective standard, and the authors should not be particularly criticized for this failure since no investigator, so far as the reviewer knows, has made much of a success in setting such objective tests for a standard budget. But such a step in the evolution of budget studies is very much to be desired.

In summary it may be said that this study of family budgets furnishes a great deal of very satisfactory detail and that it is a welcome addition of apparently carefully collected data; but its presentation is not particularly expert, nor does there seem to be any significant contribution to methods not already well known and in use at that time.

WILLIAM F. OGBURN.

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*Official Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia.* Statistics for Period 1901 to 1918, No. 12, 1919. Prepared by G. H. Knibbs, Commonwealth Statistician.

Australia's official yearbook is a statistical institution with which the members of this association are familiar. The issuance of the most recent volume bringing the statistics up to 1918, however, affords an opportunity for a brief notice. A general survey of the subjects covered in the yearbook makes one envious of the possibility of canvassing so vast a field in one volume, even though it be a volume of 1,234 pages. The volume, furthermore, is not confined to statistics, but contains a large amount of data on all phases of economic and social life of Australia. Continuity between the volumes for successive years is maintained by publishing every year special articles on various topics and printing in each issue a list of the previous articles with references. Consequently the possession of the latest volume of the yearbook enables the reader to obtain all the statistical data about Australia and gives him in addition a valuable list of references on the topics discussed in previous years.

One reason for Mr. Knibbs' ability to cover so many phases of Australian life in the compass of one volume is brought out by the population map which emphasizes the familiar fact that only the southwestern portion of the continent is at all thickly inhabited, so that the area to be covered is much smaller than the continent. It is of interest that the total population of Australia in 1918 was only slightly over 5 millions and that about 96 per cent of that population were natives of Australia or the United Kingdom, while the total proportion of persons of non-European origin was less than 1 per cent. The great contrast in this respect between the United States and Australia